

Maurice Hinchey NEWS

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Statement of Congressman Maurice D. Hinchey (NY-26)

*Solutions to the American Health Care Access Crisis
U.S. House of Representatives
2226 Rayburn House Office Building
10 a.m. - 12 p.m.*

May 1, 2001

We still don't have universal health care in this country, and we still need it. Incremental improvements in health care, as we have seen in recent years, may be nice, and they may be well intentioned, but they don't do the job.

Since the end of the debate in 1994, the situation has gotten worse. Back then, 37 million Americans had no insurance. Now there are 44 million people, and the number keeps growing. I believed back then, and still do, that there was only one solution to our health care problems: guaranteed, universal, comprehensive insurance for everyone, the single-payer plan. Single-payer doesn't just insure select groups, like children, or low-income persons. It doesn't depend on your employment status -- you're covered if your employer is big or small, if you work part-time or full-time, or if you're out of work. It would insure everyone no matter what his or her employment status. It doesn't just offer "access" to insurance. It guarantees that everyone will have insurance, and that it will be affordable.

Perhaps best of all, it has been estimated that single-payer would cost much less than the present system, because it would sharply reduce administrative costs and end marketing costs. (The estimate in 1994 was \$175 billion less annually than the level of private spending on health care.) Less money, more coverage -- how can we ignore such a sensible solution?

Universal, comprehensive coverage remains the solution for which we must aim. Everyone should have health care coverage. No one should be bankrupted by necessary treatment, and no one should live in fear of what happens if they get sick.

Congressman Maurice Hinchey

May 1, 2001

Page Two

Medicare is universal coverage for people over 65. It's not as comprehensive as it should be, but it's guaranteed. It's not cheap, but our seniors depend on it. There's no good reason why guaranteed health coverage should only be for seniors. Let's not lose sight of universal coverage as our goal. All Americans deserve it.

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